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CASE STUDY: OUR LEGACY SOFTWARE CRASHED!

Small-Agency Police Department: The Department performs general law enforcement duties for a city in Central California with a population of +/- 5,000. It is the Department's mission to ensure the peacefulness and quality of life in the small agricultural community.

Existing Environment: This is a small agency with 15 sworn officers. They have an off-site Records Management System (RMS) and an outside contract for Dispatch (CAD) services. The Chief had been looking at purchasing an RMS/CAD system of their own, but prices were well over their budget. There was no IT staff, so the budget would also have to include IT support staff, with the ongoing salary and benefits added to the annual operating budgets.

Problem: The off-line report-writing system they were using was very old and suddenly crashed. All data was lost because there was no electronic archive or storage. They needed to act fast. They wanted a comprehensive web-based system that would share data with the regional RMS and other departments. The budget to purchase a system was not available.

Project Objective: Quickly implement a state-of-the-art digital incident reporting software system that improves efficiency in incident report writing, while implementing a reliable offsite storage system for record archiving

Project Goals: The software should be accessible wherever the Internet is reachable, including laptops installed in police vehicles, via mobile devices, and in the office. Select a system that can be implemented quickly because the existing system crashed completely and was no longer usable. Select a reliable incident reporting system without the cost and maintenance associated with hosting and maintaining a system in-house. Select a system that is affordable within the existing budget.

Selection Process: Deciding to sign up for Presynct_OnDemand subscriptions was not a new concept for the Department. The services contract for the off-site RMS and CAD was, in fact, software-as-a-service (SaaS), so they were already familiar with the significant benefits of subscription software. The Chief said he'd rather add another patrol officer to support the community rather than add IT staff to support in-house technology.

Benefits Achieved:

- *Professional Image.* Presynct_OnDemand forms-based incident reporting serves as the professional report presentation to the District Attorney, the public, neighboring police departments, and others.



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- **Feet on the Street.** The Department policy is to have at least one officer (of total 15 sworn) on the street at all times so that there is always visibility in the community. Presynct_OnDemand facilitates that policy.
- **Efficiency and reduced operating costs.** Paper and printing costs are eliminated for report distribution. The District Attorney gets an electronic copy of incident reports and prints out whatever copies they need for themselves.
- **Fast report turnaround.** The district attorney's office appreciates the fast turnaround of incident reports and the quick response they receive for requests to resend reports or provide copies of reports to others. The DA's office staff can sign on to Presynct as GUEST users to download and print reports on demand.
- **Accessibility.** The Department has wireless internet in the cars. According to the Chief, when he responds to a call, he enters all his notes into Presynct_OnDemand on scene rather than on paper for later transfer. When the call is completed, he clicks SEND and his incident report is filed.
- **Affordability.** The department's cell phone bill is more expensive than subscribing to Presynct_OnDemand. Actually, cell phone service is, in fact, a subscription to on-demand services.
- **Quick Implementation.** Three weeks after contract signing, the Department was fully operational in Presynct_OnDemand using digital versions of its existing forms.
- **Accurate UCR statistics.** With the agency-native forms created in Presynct_OnDemand, the clerk now gets details on-line in Presynct_OnDemand.
- **Fully supported at no additional cost.** The Department accesses Presynct_OnDemand using the existing desktop PCs and laptops to file their incident reports. They are not responsible for managing the system and don't have expensive paper-based off-site storage needs.
- **Disaster recovery solution.** Presynct_OnDemand is part of their COOP (Continuity of Operations) Plan. If the building burns down, all that is needed to be fully operational is the patrol car, a pistol, a shotgun, and a laptop for access to Presynct_OnDemand. The building now is just office space.
- **Security and Privacy.** All data to and from Presynct_OnDemand are encrypted in transit. The Chief says it would be easier to get crime report data from the courthouse public record than it would be to try and snag encrypted data over the Internet.
- **Trial Period and Discounted Fee.** When first starting out, the Department wanted to make sure the software worked for them so they paid the subscription fees on a month-to-month



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basis. Once they were confident that the system works well and meets their needs, they took advantage of the available discount for annual payment.

Lessons Learned:

- Prepare for change. At first, some of the officers hated it...because it was change. Now all but one user likes it.
- Plan on a 90-day transition period. It takes about 90 days to get the user from “I hate change” to “I love this.”

User Feedback Post-Implementation:

Patrol Supervisor, “I love the fact that I can review reports remotely. Our officers are more productive, too.”

Detective, “Being able to electronically send reports to the DA is great!”

Chief of Police, “We needed a comprehensive web-based system that can transfer incident data to other agencies. Dollar for dollar, Presynct_OnDemand was the best choice. With Presynct, we have a record of all reportable incidents from petty theft to homicide. And by backing it up locally and saving it remotely, our files are safe in case of catastrophe.”

For information or assistance choosing software, contact Tim Pakes. Tim has been in the software and business services arena for over 15 years. You can reach him at 866-773-7962 or tpakes@presynct.com